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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 075006

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TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [AF](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING: NIGERIA

1. The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Nigeria and recommends avoiding all but essential travel to the Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers. Violent crime is a problem in Lagos and other large cities as well as on the roads between cities. Tension between some Muslim and Christian communities, and between ethnic groups, occasionally results in violence, but is not directed specifically against American citizens. This replaces the Travel Warning for Nigeria dated December 2, 2008, to note additional areas of military operations, violent activity, and crime in Nigeria.

2. American citizens should defer all but essential travel to the Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers because of the continued risks of kidnapping, robbery, and other armed attacks in these areas, especially against oil-related facilities and other infrastructure. A loose alliance of militant groups has conducted a number of attacks, mostly in Rivers state, against oil installations and posts of the Nigerian military's Joint Task Force (JTF), which is attempting to close the militant camps. Since January 2008, over 54 foreign national oil workers or business people in parts of the Niger Delta region have been kidnapped from off-shore and land-based oil facilities, residential compounds, and public roadways, and similar incidents have occurred in several other parts of Nigeria. The Nigerian government considers militant camps and surrounding areas in the Delta region states of Delta, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers to be conflict areas. In May 2009, the JTF began conducting larger-scale military activities against

militant camps in Delta State that further heightened security concerns in the state. JTF operations could also begin in other parts of the Delta region as determined by the Nigerian Government. Travel by foreigners to these areas without prior consultation and coordination with local security authorities is not recommended, as the Nigerian Government may see this activity as inappropriate and potentially illegal. Nigerian authorities detained six American citizens, including journalists, on six separate occasions, in this same region in 2008. The Nigerian government interrogated these Americans for lengthy periods without bringing formal charges, and ultimately deported them. Journalists are required to obtain a special accreditation from the Ministry of Information prior to traveling to conflict areas in the Niger Delta region states. This special accreditation is in addition to the general press accreditation and valid Nigerian visa required to conduct such activities elsewhere in Nigeria.

¶3. Many foreign oil companies operating in the Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers have implemented "essential travel only" policies for their personnel. The U.S. Mission currently requires advance permission for U.S. Government travel to these states, as well as the states of Abia, Edo and Imo, given the safety and security risk assessments, and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate's limited ability to provide assistance to people detained by Nigerian authorities in these states. The incidence of kidnappings and other armed attacks is on the rise in Abia and Imo states. American citizens who are resident in these Niger Delta and southeastern states are

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advised to review their personal security in light of the information contained in this Travel Warning.

¶4. Violent crime committed by individuals and gangs, as well as by some persons wearing police and military uniforms, is an ongoing problem, especially at night. Crime is particularly acute in Lagos. Traveling outside of major cities during hours of darkness is not recommended due to both crime and road safety concerns. Visitors to Nigeria, including American citizens, have been victims of armed robbery on the airport roads from Lagos and Abuja during both daylight and nighttime hours. Some visitors and resident Americans have experienced armed muggings, assaults, burglary, kidnappings, and extortion, often involving violence, as well as carjackings, roadblock robberies, and armed break-ins.

¶5. Religious tension between some Muslim and Christian communities occasionally results in acts of isolated communal violence that could erupt quickly and without warning. So far, American citizens have not been directly targeted. The states of Kano, Kaduna and Plateau are particularly volatile. Rival ethnic groups have clashed violently in Delta state around Warri city and in North-Central Plateau state.

¶6. U.S. citizens who travel to or reside in Nigeria are strongly advised to register through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>.

Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

¶7. U.S. citizens should contact the U.S. Embassy in Abuja or the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos for

up-to-date information on any restrictions. The U.S. Embassy in Abuja is open Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The U.S. Consulate General in Lagos is open Monday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The U.S. Embassy in Abuja can be contacted by phone at [234](9)461-4400. American citizens may contact the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos at [234(1)460-3600. You may also visit the U.S. Mission's website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/>.

18. U.S. citizens should also consult the Department of State's most recent Country Specific Information for Nigeria and the Worldwide Caution, which are located on the Department's web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

9.Minimize considered.  
CLINTON